



Center for the Study of Addictions and Recovery

October 28, 2015

Re: DC-TRO 15-1-0262 (11/2/2015)

Honorable Judge Kobayashi,

Please accept this letter in support of Ms. Darlene Brothers.

I shall be in attendance in court on Nov. 2, 2015 to elaborate on any or all the points outlined here if requested. Since this letter is long, I first list below and the conclusions I have reached on matters relevant to the above referenced case, followed by supporting observations:

1. Ms. Brothers is one of the kindest, most compassionate generous and selfless individuals I have ever had the pleasure to meet, both to me personally, and to the Kuau Bayview community.
2. My professional opinion as an addiction researcher with over 20 years of experience working with drug-involved and drug-dependent individuals categorically tells me that Ms. Brothers has never shown any signs of drug use in the 2+ years that I have been around her as her next door neighbor
3. Similarly, I have never witnessed any signs of drug dealing activity in or around Ms. Brothers' property
4. I have however, witnessed signs of past emotional trauma she experienced in and around 40 Kaiea Place, my home since June 2013, previously owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Boucher.

I purchased a home at 40 Kaeia Pl. in the Kuau Bayview (KB) area of Paia in May 2013 and moved in shortly after that. The sellers were Mr. and Mrs. Boucher. During the process of purchasing and transferring the residence, I met Mrs. Boucher briefly on two occasions: Once when I first visited the house before making an offer, and the second time, after the sale was completed, to be oriented to various house items and receive the keys. (I never met Mr. Boucher). Though Mrs. Boucher was superficially affable during those brief meetings, I realized after I had moved in that a handful of statements she had volunteered to me about the house, although relatively trivial, were lies. I remember finding it surprising that someone would gratuitously offer falsehoods to my face, as there was no apparent reason for any of it ...

Independently of the above, as part of my orientation to the community, I had inquired with Mrs. Boucher about the neighbors in general (routine questions: e.g., are they noisy?); she indicated in response that everyone was fine except for the woman next-door who was 'difficult', a statement that was subsequently reiterated by a contractor I had invited to provide an estimate for some construction I was considering doing in the house. The

contractor was already familiar with the house as he told me he was close to the Bouchers. When I asked whether he anticipated any issues with the project I was considering (I was thinking of structural problems or difficulties obtaining a permit), the contractor said that the only issue he foresaw was that the woman next door “likes to complain” and would probably do so if I ever did any construction on my property. (I eventually got KB’s approval, SMA and county permits for a small project that never elicited any complaints from anyone). Therefore I was initially quite apprehensive about this next door neighbor whom I hadn’t met but about whom I had already heard ‘bad things’ ...

I eventually met the individual (Miss Brothers). While she, like me and many others on Maui, could be described as somewhat ‘eccentric’, I have had nothing but the most positive of experiences with Miss Brothers who has been my next-door neighbor for the past nearly 2 1/2 years. First, ***she consistently shows a level of devotion, generosity and kindness to the KB community that is absolutely unparalleled.*** Her invaluable contributions to our KB community span an astoundingly wide breadth of expertise (from home repairs and landscaping to accounting and web design/maintenance) as described in the letter submitted by Luba Reeves, our board President. I have seen Miss Brothers work well into the night, at times in the rain, tending to the landscaping of our neighborhood’s entrance around Hana Highway. In a completely different area, Ms. Brothers who has worked previously as a fraud examiner, has also worked tirelessly for months to recoup tens of thousands of dollars on behalf of KB from an unscrupulous insurance company that had double billed the community for years (before Ms. Reeves and Mr. Judson assumed their roles as President and Treasurer, respectively). In addition to KB getting a substantial amount of money back, her investigation has resulted in the State of Hawaii’s Insurance Commissioner’s office opening its own investigation of the insurer who is now believed to have bilked numerous Homeowners’ Associations around Maui. Note that Ms. Brothers’ investigation and persistence in this matter, as well as her assuming the landscaping, accounting and community managing responsibilities have resulted in the KB annual fees being slashed by two thirds, to a mere \$100 annually... She performs all this work in addition to her income producing profession as a computer expert and web designer, for less than the equivalent of minimal wage.

In addition to her devotion and tireless work on behalf of our community, Mrs. Brothers has been an invaluable help and an amazingly kind and generous neighbor to me personally from the time I moved in my house. I am ‘a city person’: I moved here from NYC’s Manhattan where I resided for over 30 years; I had never owned or lived in a house. When I first arrived, everything about living in a house and having a yard seemed like insurmountable challenges or mysteries to me. I would not have been able to make a successful transition living in my house on Maui had it not been for Ms. Brothers’ unwavering availability and support on such mundane yet critical issues as plumbing, an garage door behaving badly, finding reliable contractors, getting

used to the way ‘things work’ on Maui etc. *Overall, I came to know Ms. Brothers as an extraordinarily kind, trustworthy, giving and selfless individual. I am very grateful to have her as a neighbor.*

Now to some of the allegations made by the complainants.

First, to the statement that she struck Mr. Boucher: while I was not present during the alleged incident, I can say with complete certainty that Ms. Brothers is one of the most sensitive, caring and compassionate individuals I have ever met, both to human beings and to animals. ***I simply cannot believe that she would have ever stricken anyone or acted in a violent manner no matter what the circumstances.***

Second, to the allegations surrounding the use of drugs and the dealing of drugs. This is probably where my observations are most pertinent: as I have worked in the addiction field my entire professional career. At the risk of appearing contrived, a summary of my credentials are as follows: I hold a PhD in psychology and have worked as an addiction scientist for over 20 years. In that context, I have received numerous federal scientific research grants from the National Institute on Health (NIH) to conduct long-term studies among persons using or addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. I was employed by the same company, the National Development and Research Institutes, Inc. (NDRI- a research organization specializing on addiction) my entire career: from 1994 until earlier this year when I retired (I now consult on addiction matters for government agencies and private organizations.) I am the founder and Director (now Emeritus) of the [Center for the Study of Addictions and Recovery at the National Development and Research Institutes, Inc. \(NDRI\)](#) and also served as Deputy Director of Institute for Treatment and Services Research at NDRI for 10 years. Since beginning my career, in addition to conducting studies on addiction, I have provided training and consultancy about addiction to U.S. federal agencies such as the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP – the ‘drug czar’s office’) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); to state agencies such as New York State’s Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS); and to private institutions such as the Betty Ford Institute. I serve as Associate Editor on the board of two international scientific journals. In the course of my work, I have come into contact with and interviewed thousands of individuals at various stages and levels of their drug and alcohol use and/or dependence. Therefore I am well placed to recognize the signs of drug use and drug addiction ***Based on that extensive professional experience, I can categorically state that Mrs. Brothers has never exhibited any signs of substance use or substance dependence in any of the encounters I have had with her over 2.5 years.*** Some of these encounters have been totally un-scheduled in moments where I had emergencies at home (garage door problems at night) and called her or went over to her house for help. At no time did I ever witness any drug-related paraphernalia, behavior or anything else that would suggest drug use or any form of intoxication. In fact, Ms. Brothers is not only an extremely healthy individual in terms of her lifestyle and eating habits, she is one of the rare individuals in the United States today

who does not even take over the counter medication for minor ailments as most of us do on occasion. Therefore overall, in my professional opinion as an addiction scientist and as a neighbor who has had multiple encounters with her at different times of the day for over two years, ***the allegations of drug use can only be characterized as utterly incredible, fabricated falsehoods.***

With respect to the issue of potential drug dealing: Ms. Brothers lives next door to me and I can probably count on the fingers of both hands the number of times I have seen or heard a vehicle or individual in her driveway or around her property since I reside here starting June 2013. The individuals I have seen around her property were contractors working on time-limited projects in her home. Generally, Ms. Brothers seem to keep to herself, she doesn't even own a cell phone! Please note that I resided on the Lower East side of NYC for the first 17 years I lived there, in the 1980's, when drug dealing in the neighborhood was almost endemic and the crack epidemic raging. Therefore I know what drug dealing activities in a neighborhood involve – lots of people and cars coming and going, often shady characters passing things from one person to the other, looking around to make sure they aren't observed, intoxicated individuals hanging around the general area, etc... ***I can categorically say that I have never witnessed any activity remotely suggesting drug dealing in the surroundings of Ms. Brothers' residence.***

I shall end with an anecdote that gets to the very heart of what this case is about. Shortly after I moved into my house, in June 2013, I had the opportunity of attending a meeting of KB's Homeowners Association meeting where I introduced myself as the new owner of 40 Kaeia place. That statement was greeted by cheers and applause from several people in attendance. This came as a surprise. When I inquired about the reason for this rather unexpected reaction, I was told (by individuals others than Ms. Brothers) that the previous owners of my property had been an absolute nightmare; someone (again, not Ms Brothers) jokingly suggested I would need to hold an exorcism to rid the house of the past owners' 'evil' prior to moving in ... You may imagine my surprise... The reason for this (then) strange episode became increasingly clearer over time as I interacted with Ms. Brothers on several occasions subsequently. I started noticing that when in or around my house, she exhibited what can only be described as signs of emotional abuse and trauma. Very early on, she basically could not bring herself to come into my house, something that I found hard to understand. It wasn't until after I had made some major changes my house (e.g., flooring, kitchen counters) and my furniture was fully moved in that she began being able to physically enter the house. She stated several times that before these changes had been made, merely entering the house reminded her so much of the cruelty she had endured by the previous owners that it was difficult to be there. Another set of neighbors close to my property had also alluded to an overall 'bad taste' in their mouth about anything surrounding my property because of what they had endured from the previous owners. While I was not a KB resident when the Bouchers owned the house, I can attest to one fact: I had noticed security cameras around the property when I first visited and contacted the Bouchers to inquire

about their use and ask that they be removed. Mrs. Boucher replied that the cameras were fake. Later on, Ms. Brothers and I were able to inspect the cameras and discovered that while the cameras were indeed dummies, there was elaborate wiring running from the camera locations into the house, suggesting that there had indeed been functional cameras prior to my acquiring the property. *Note that Mr. Boucher had been charged with 2 counts of harassment by stalking that were dismissed only because his lawyer was able to claim that the cameras were fake and no one ever came to inspect the cameras...*

Over time, Ms. Brothers has selectively alluded to some of the cruelties and harassment to which the Bouchers subjected her, and others were mentioned by additional KB residents. However, it was not until I read the Bouchers' complaint earlier this month that I truly started to appreciate the full scope of their lies and relentless desire to persecute Ms. Brothers with whom they have had no interaction for almost five years... I suspect that the reason why I only now realize the full extent of their behavior is that as someone who knows little of the history of the Bouchers/Brothers interaction and has come to know Ms. Brothers as described herein, until I saw in writing the extent to which they are willing to go to persecute and defame her, it was very difficult to believe. I have never witnessed or heard of anything like the amount of ill will and utter bile as what this couple has disgorged on Ms. Brothers for over a decade.

In closing, I must confess that I had very serious trepidations about writing this letter and attending the court session for fear of reprisal and harassment from the Bouchers. *I decided to write this letter only because of my deep respect and appreciation of Ms. Brothers but I, as the KB board members, fear that in the absence of a TRO against the Bouchers and an order that Mr Boucher's blog be taken down, we may all become the next targets of their persistent harassment.*

I trust your Honor will consider my observations and that of many others submitted to this court to take steps that will finally put an end to the Bouchers' abuse of Ms Brothers once and for all.

Respectfully,



Alexandre Laudet, Ph.D.
Center Emeritus Director