

Mr. Tony Duckworth, Esq.  
709 N San Jacinto Street  
Conroe, Texas 77301

April 4, 2023

[REDACTED]

Re: Lawrence Hopkins

Mr. Duckworth:

My name is [REDACTED] and I am writing to you on Lawrence Hopkins's behalf. I have known and been friends with Lawrence since we met during our freshman year at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1985. We have remained friends since then with our relationship ebbing and flowing as most friendships do through graduate school, marriages, children, and employment.

At TAMU Lawrence and I met and developed our friendship through the several-times-a-week meetings at the Baptist Student Union (BSU) and especially through our common interest in sports. We frequently double-dated to football games with our eventual spouses and spent countless hours at basketball and baseball games talking about sports and school, but our special bond was our common effort to win an intramural sports title. We never did, although we came particularly close on several occasions in sports trivia, but our friendship developed throughout our time at TAMU.

Once we graduated Lawrence moved on to study at Seminary and I entered the workforce as an engineer. We were each groomsmen in our respective weddings and both had stable families with eventually several children and grandchildren each. Being in different cities our friendship became static but we remained in contact to the extent of knowing our family and employment situations along with occasional face-to-face meetings over dinner or lunch if our travels put us in the same vicinity. As Lawrence's career advanced he frequently delivered sermons which were available online and when I had the opportunity I would watch those and we would occasionally discuss them with the conversations, of course, weaving into a sports and family discussion.

In mid-July 2022 on a Saturday afternoon I looked Lawrence up online to watch one of his sermons. I was surprised that he had no sermons online at Rollingbrook Fellowship in Baytown, Texas, since I had seen them there previously. It also appeared that he had left Rollingbrook since the church staff page no longer included him. I then did a simple Google search and, of course, discovered he had left the church shortly after his arrest in late June 2022. I was so

stunned at this online search that my wife looked at me and asked what was wrong. I told her what I had found and spent the next several hours considering this news.

After a phone conversation that evening with a common BSU friend of Lawrence and myself I tried contacting Lawrence to see how I could help him. I sent a text to his phone on Monday but received no response; it turned out Lawrence did not have that phone anymore and that the prosecutor probably had it. On Tuesday I had lunch with another friend and we discussed what I had found out and through that discussion I decided to send physical letters to both Lawrence and his wife [REDACTED] individually since I was not sure who was still in the house they then owned. I mailed the letters on Thursday and told Lawrence in his letter that, "you are still my friend." I also left my cell phone number so he could easily reach me. That Friday evening he contacted me by phone. We agreed to meet Sunday afternoon where he would tell me his story. We did so and have continued to meet every couple weeks since for a couple hours at a time re-building our relationship while I provided Lawrence a safe place to talk about whatever was on his mind during this transitional time.

I tell this detail to emphasize to you that Lawrence did not reach out to me looking for help, legal aid, money, or to provide a recommendation for him. I reached out to him fully five weeks after his arrest and he responded promptly and, in all our hours of conversation since, has divulged what I believe to be the complete and truthful story of how he got in legal trouble. He made a colossal mistake but has told the truth to both the police and prosecutor's office since his arrest. Based on our conversations, this truth is being confirmed through repeated interviews with some of those Lawrence may have come into contact with in his church employment and community involvement. I have found no inconsistencies in what he has told me.

Lawrence has been one of the individuals in my life I trust, enjoy, and seek out. His knowledge, heart for others, and dedication to family are impressive. I have been fortunate enough to have four to five close male friends, all of whom I have known for well over 30 years. I would not tolerate anyone in that friend circle if they were not intelligent, upstanding, loyal, and family-oriented. While Lawrence is not in that small friend circle with me, largely since our careers separated us, he meets everything I look for in a close friend, including longevity and personally knowing their past which stretches over decades. It's obvious Lawrence made a large mistake, and he knows this. He has lost a lot due to his decision, including family, friends, and career. However, one should normally not be punitively judged solely by a single mistake, however large, particularly when no one was harmed by that mistake. Lawrence has been a trusted clergyman who provided individuals safety and guidance at their most gut-wrenching and vulnerable times. He continues to provide these positives in our friendship. I am not aware of a single accusation made against Lawrence other than the legal issue he is dealing with now.

My request to you, Mr. Duckworth, through the court, is to provide appropriate punishment, which I believe should be on the lower end of the possible punishment spectrum given Lawrence's age, lack of prior legal record, complete honesty with law enforcement, spotless record since his arrest, his voluntary and active participation in recovery efforts, and his ability to positively impact society. I believe there is little to be gained by having Lawrence placed in

prison or having his future punitively harmed just because it can be done. He still has a lot to provide others with his wisdom, empathy, and work ethic. He has already suffered greatly in this past year; do not do more harm than necessary. I am convinced this was a one-time event for Lawrence.

Finally, I am looking forward to continuing my friendship with Lawrence. He has been a positive in my life for decades as he has been in other lives. Please have the court consider Lawrence's past and the positive impacts both with his family and others that he will have in the future.

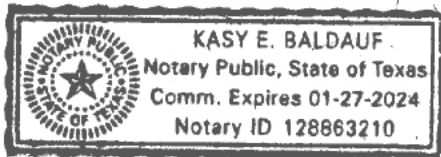
Respectfully submitted,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

STATE OF TEXAS           §  
  §  
COUNTY OF HARRIS    §

This instrument was acknowledged before me on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022, by  
[REDACTED]



K. Baldauf  
Notary Public's Signature

REC. 4.12.23

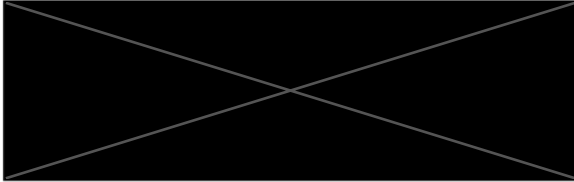
April 10, 2023

Mr. Tony Duckworth  
709 N. San Jacinto Street  
Conroe, TX 77301

Dear Mr. Duckworth,

Please find enclosed a notarized copy of the letter of character reference for Lawrence Clay Hopkins. If you have any questions, you may email me at [REDACTED] or call me at 972.824.3065.

Sincerely,



April 10, 2023

My name is [REDACTED]. I first met Lawrence Clay Hopkins (Clay) in the late fall of 2004 when he and his family moved to Midlothian, Texas. We got to know each other, and I considered him a good friend. He was a confidant to me during a difficult season in my life, praying for me and encouraging me.

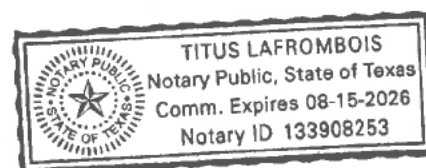
During his time in Midlothian, my children and stepchildren were under his direct and indirect leadership. I am grateful for his impact on their lives during those years. In fact, in 2006, when my stepdaughter lost a close friend to suicide, she credited Clay's support and guidance as the factors for how she managed that loss and made it through that season of grief.

In August of 2013, Clay moved from the Midlothian area. Since that time, Clay and I have texted or called each other a few times a year to discuss what was happening in our families and careers. We also met socially a few times.

To say that I was shocked when I found out about Clay's arrest is a huge understatement. In the years I had the most contact with him, I never saw any behavior or had any conversations with Clay that would alarm or concern me about his faithfulness to his wife. I have had several phone conversations with Clay since his arrest. He has seemed genuinely shocked by his action, as well. He had expressed deep remorse and regret to me and says he grieves over the effects his behavior has had on his family, friends, church, community and the cause of Christ.

Clay has told me that he has reached out to get help in a variety of ways, including individual counseling, group counseling and being part of a 12-Step Program. In my latest conversation with him, he told me how he has benefited having accountability partners who speak into his life each week.

I have experienced several emotions during the months after Clay's arrest. As I mentioned above, I was shocked. I have also experienced deep sadness and anger – anger that Clay did not get help sooner and anger that his delay in getting help has negatively impacted the lives of so many people. But I have also felt compassion, knowing what Clay has meant to me, my family and the people he has positively affected through the years. Today, I feel hope. Hope that as he continues to pursue changes in his life, that his season will not be his most lasting legacy.



April 10, 2023

c/o Tony Duckworth, Esq.  
Duckworth & Ray, LLP  
709 N San Jacinto St.  
Conroe, TX 77301

Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is Maurice Crane. I am Certified Sex Addiction Recovery Coach working with Lawrence Hopkins ("Mr. Hopkins").

I first met Mr. Hopkins when I was an on-site counselor for small breakout groups at the Gateway to Freedom Workshop for men struggling with sex and/or porn addiction. Mr. Hopkins was assigned to my small group consisting of about seven men. I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Hopkins outside of the group a couple of times and learned his story of having been in full-time local church ministry then forfeiting it all to a deeply embedded sexual addiction.

The issue of sex addiction is very complex and misunderstood with two camps of thought – those who support the theory that sexual behaviors can become an addiction, and those who do not believe that sexual behaviors can be construed as an addiction. However, when we engage in such behaviors as coping mechanisms due to early childhood traumas of abuse, neglect, loss, etc., those sexual behaviors can become unhealthy and even destructive over time.

Typically with many cases I have dealt with, a behavior that lasts over the course of decades when unchallenged with proper counseling or therapy, progresses from one type of sexual theme to another which becomes normalized and no longer carries with it the same "high." This manifests by driving the addict to riskier sexual behavior. Although sex addicts experience sexual fantasy, all are at different levels. They can, however, increase the chances of crossing what is known as the "flesh barrier." The flesh barrier can be a very natural progression, because the addict is always trying to return to the same *high* as was once encountered during the introduction to such stimuli and accompanying behavior.

This is where my road and Mr. Hopkins' road intersected. Throughout the weekend workshop and subsequent private counseling with me, much was uncovered as to Mr. Hopkins' emotional issues relating to self-acceptance. Due to what he had experienced as a child as well as his formative teenage years, his progression away from a healthy self-perspective decreased and with continued sexual coping behavior, his shame and isolation increased. Again, these are typical emotional and physical responses of an addict.

Entering into ministry seemed a very natural step for Mr. Hopkins given his upbringing and temperament. It was an environment that helped him stay connected as well as serve those people entrusted to his care. Getting married and entering into ministry can be wonderful deflections, as they are novel experiences in life which an addict can become dependent on in order to hide even more from their pain. Such wonderful and healthy experiences can suppress

addictive behavior for a season, but since deeper issues were not dealt with that ended up becoming triggers to such behavior, the suppression is short lived. Typically, addicts return to old patterns, especially when the newness of life experiences wears off. A sense of shame and fear of anyone finding out then increases in the addict, because in a faith-based life, such behaviors are viewed as sinful. In faith-based vocations this is usually grounds for dismissal.

Mr. Hopkins found himself in his most recent sexual escapade crossing the flesh barrier because of the internal need to experience something of increased sexual excitement and connection—something new with more risk, thereby feeding into the dopamine rush which creates sexual arousal or other feelings surrounding various forms of substance abuse. The thought of the possible experience is what creates the craving rush, and in those moments of emotional weakness, the addict gives over to the offending, unhealthy behavior time and again.

Although criminal in behavior, as it was in Mr. Hopkins' case, clinically speaking, this can be the next stage in the life of a sex addict depending upon a very complex set of life circumstances. As is common with the majority, if not all addicts, regardless of the substance abused, it is more about feeling connected and validated than it is about the substance they have chosen. In the addiction recovery industry, it is often stated that it is not about the drugs, sex, or substance of choice. It is about filling a need inside the person, which more often than not has to do with an attempt to reattach to a time or relationship where they felt safe in their life. Overall, if the choice of substance helps to quell this need, it becomes a "friend" and the new safe place. The addict learns to navigate the dysfunction because of the benefit they receive from it. Mr. Hopkins is now allowing himself to be emotionally and physically challenged to think differently about himself and his past life experiences.

Since attending the weekend workshop and seeking my help for further spiritual and clinical counseling in September 2022, Mr. Hopkins has been a very faithful client. The only sessions he missed were due to court appearances or parole meetings, which we were able to reschedule.

As part of my coaching, I assign homework and endeavor to keep my clientele working through their emotions during the week and not simply relying upon weekly talk sessions for behavioral change. Mr. Hopkins has been faithful in completing his assignments, which has opened the door for even greater success in his own behavioral recovery.

In my professional opinion, Mr. Hopkins' current living and work situations seem beneficial and appear to have a very positive effect on him. He has been forthcoming and open regarding his recent divorce from his wife, [REDACTED] and has been dealing with that as a part of our sessions, in addition to his ability to effectively maneuver his feelings regarding the estranged relationship with his children. Mr. Hopkins has no visions of grandeur in trying to regain some form of church leadership but is taking one day at a time to simply heal emotionally and redirect his past physical behaviors into healthy behaviors. Although I do not discuss specifics of our client/coach relationship, I will say I am often excited to meet with Mr. Hopkins because of the deeper realizations and revelations he shares each week as he continues to do the work I have presented and continues to participate in support and accountability groups.

c/o Tony Duckworth, Esq.  
April 10, 2023  
Page 3

I trust this letter will prove helpful to you as a source of counsel for Mr. Hopkins.

Sincerely,

Maurice S. Crane  
1315 W. Dees Rd.  
Lakeland, FL 33810

[www.thesilentaddiction.com](http://www.thesilentaddiction.com)

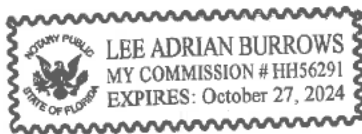
Email: [REDACTED]

Cell: [REDACTED]

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF POLK**

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this  
10 day of April, 2023, by Maurice S. Crane.

(NOTARY SEAL)



*Lee A. Burrows*

Signature of Notary Public

*LEE A. BURROWS*

Print, Type or Stamp Name of Notary

Personally Known: ☒

OR Produced Identification ☐

Type of Identification Produced: \_\_\_\_\_



April 10, 2023

To Whom it May Concern

My name is [REDACTED], and I am the owner of [REDACTED] Auto Services in [REDACTED], Texas. Lawrence Hopkins has been employed here since last July when he approached me looking for work. As we began to talk, he opened up about his legal situation. He was direct and honest with me. I am thirty-four years old, and have been in a wheelchair since I was three. I was given a second chance at life at that time and have experienced other second chances throughout my life, so I try to offer second chances with others, especially when I can tell they are being honest with me.

During the first weeks of employment, Mr. Hopkins shared some of his own personal issues he was facing related to addiction. As someone who has faced my own addiction problems, we quickly found that despite our age difference, coming from different cultures (I was born in Egypt and did not come to the US until I was ten), and different religious backgrounds (Mr. Hopkins is Christian while I am Muslim), we had something in common that would open a door to a valued friendship. Over the past nine months, Mr. Hopkins has become someone that I confide in with my own personal struggles related to family issues, marital issues and ongoing addiction issues. He listens to me without judgment and when appropriate will offer encouragement which I value. When I had a recent accident that resulted in my being absent from work for six weeks, he would frequently check on me. He is a true friend.

As an employee, he always gives me one hundred percent. While having little background in the automotive field, he quickly became familiar with the tasks I needed him to do as well as how we operate our shop. At his current pace, I envision promoting him to a shop manager position, giving him even more responsibility.

I know that he knows he messed up and made a big mistake. I know he misses his family greatly and also misses the important work he did for the church. Those losses have been devastating to him. As someone who believes in offering second chances, I would ask the court to mercifully grant Mr. Hopkins a second chance to prove he is someone who can be trusted and be of use to society. He has definitely demonstrated he is that kind of man to me both personally and professionally, and I do not know where I would be right now without him.

Respectfully,



[REDACTED]

State of Texas

County of Harris

Before me, Ivonne Sanchez, on this day personally appeared

[REDACTED] known to me (or proved to me on the oath of \_\_\_\_\_)

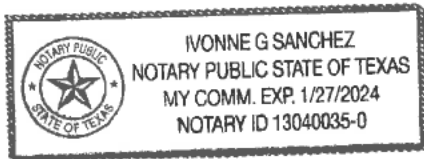
or through Texas DL to be the person whose name is subscribed to the

foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and

consideration therein expressed. Given under my hand and seal of office this 12 day

of April, 2023.

(Personalized Seal)



Ivonne Sanchez  
Notary Public's Signature

[REDACTED]

Affidavit for Lawrence Clay Hopkins

My name is [REDACTED]. I am a [REDACTED] and I currently reside in [REDACTED] Texas. Previously, I worked at First Baptist Church of College Station from August 2016 to December of 2021 where I worked with Lawrence Clay Hopkins.

I, [REDACTED], swear that the information in my sworn statement is truthful to the best of my knowledge and understanding.

In June of 2022, when I heard the news of the arrest of Lawrence Clay Hopkins, I was in shock over the accusation. As a co-worker as well as close friend with the accused, I had never seen any activity or cause for concern regarding his behavior toward me, my wife, or any of the congregants of our church including the college students and high school students I observed him interact with.

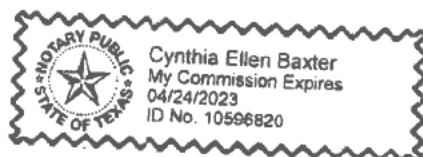
I have since learned more from Lawrence Hopkins himself regarding the depth of the sexual misconduct that he was involved in outside of his marriage. It saddens me to hear him share of the choices he has made. He has unequivocally stated that at no point has any action been taken with a minor previous or even during his arrest. I am inclined to believe this claim as there has been nothing come to light among the congregation or students I worked with during that season.

Lawrence Hopkins and his former wife [REDACTED] were close friends of ours that we trusted to babysit our child. We spent holidays in their home. I spent many times a week in Clay's office discussing life and ministry matters. I have traveled with Clay to New York City, Washington DC and Clarksdale, Mississippi and never once was led to question his character or to suspect any of this activity.

I know this has been a challenging year for Lawrence Clay Hopkins but from what I know he has been truthful and forthcoming about his indiscretions. He has not hidden things or lied. From what I can tell through conversations with him, his life is on a path towards healing and restoration.

Once again, I, [REDACTED], swear that the information shared is truthful to the best of my knowledge and understanding.

*[Handwritten Signature]*



*Cynthia Ellen Baxter 04/19/2023*  
*Notary 04/24/2023*

3-16-2023

Re: Lawrence Clayton Hopkins

To whom it may concern,

I offer this letter in support of Mr. Hopkins (Clay). I attend Rollingbrook Fellowship Church in Baytown, Texas, Clay's former employer. I had limited interaction with him during his employ, except for occasional committee meetings or in passing in a hallway.

When the Church was informed of his arrest in Montgomery County, I clearly heard God's voice say, "he's going to need a friend." Indeed, he did. My wife and I agreed to offer our home to Clay and his wife, [REDACTED] as a place of respite from prying and gossip that was sure to follow.

Clay moved into our spare bedroom several days later. He did not complain about his arrest, and he eventually became more comfortable in his new surroundings. Clay immediately immersed himself in daily bible study and meetings with his sponsors each morning. He soon landed a full-time job at an automotive shop in [REDACTED], which helped keep him busy. Along with daily sponsored meetings he now attends a Wednesday evening Men's bible study here in Baytown.

As Clay became more comfortable he opened up to us about the charges against him, and how his attorney is handling his case. It's only fair to say, anything discussed in our home does not leave our home, and I believe he was relieved to know he still had someone to confide in. Clay is, indeed, one of the family.

I am aware of the charges against Clay, and while I find it disturbing, I also believe he recognizes the harm he has done to himself and his loved ones. I believe he can leave this behind him (though it will never go away), given the chance to redeem himself.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Baytown, Tx. 77521

State of Texas

County of Harris

Before me, Dimitry Manzano, on this day personally appeared

[REDACTED], known to me (or proved to me on the oath of Drivers License

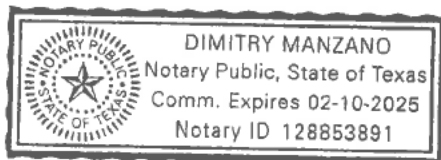
or through \_\_\_\_\_ to be the person whose name is subscribed to the

foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and

consideration therein expressed. Given under my hand and seal of office this 21 day

of April, 2023.

(Personalized Seal)



[Signature]  
Notary Public's Signature

3-16-2023

Re: Lawrence Clayton Hopkins

To whom it may concern,

Clay Hopkins began working for our church a few years ago. Although I had met Clay and [REDACTED] I had only spoken to them a few times. I enjoyed hearing them speak several times during Sunday services.

When our pastor spoke the Sunday after Clay's arrest I felt sad for him and his family. I began praying and immediately agreed with my husband when he said Clay needs a friend.

We decided to offer a place of sanctuary in our home if they felt a need to get away from the stress. Soon after this we learned of his need of a place to stay. We had an extra room so it seemed a good solution.

When he first came I could see the pain, though we didn't dwell on that. Our job was to support, pray for and help him in any way we could. So, we emptied the room, prayed for God's presence to fill it and for His protection.

When Clay moved in there were no problems, no uncomfortable moments like you would expect with a stranger living in your home. We felt comfortable with him from the first. He was already involved in a men's Bible study and had made plans for a weekend intervention program, which he completed. He immersed himself in Bible study, counseling and work while also taking care of his daily chores here.

Understanding the stress of this time, we try to find ways to include him in family activities, movie night at home, a walk in the park, dinner out and of course Christmas. These things have served to deepen our relationship as friends and supporters. He has become a part of our family and we are glad to have him here.

Clay is a good man who made a bad choice. He knows that and is working hard to repair what he can of the life he destroyed by his thoughtlessness. I do believe that he can, with God's help, put this behind him and in time rebuild a good life.

My prayers for him will continue daily. He is a part of us and as such I pray for him just as I do the rest of the family.

---

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Baytown, TX 77521

State of Texas  
County of Harris

Before me, Dimitry Manzano, on this day personally appeared

[REDACTED], known to me (or proved to me on the oath of Private License)

or through \_\_\_\_\_ to be the person whose name is subscribed to the

foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and

consideration therein expressed. Given under my hand and seal of office this 21 day

of April, 2023.

(Personalized Seal)

[Signature]  
Notary Public's Signature

