

DEAR FRIENDS,

IT'S BEEN A LONG SEVEN MONTHS THAT I HAVE BEEN LOCKED UP HERE, AND ALL OF YOU OUT THERE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO LET ME OUT OF THIS HOLE. ALL I CAN SAY IS THANK YOU TO YOU ALL. I TRIED TO SEND THAT MESSAGE OUT EVERY WAY I COULD BUT I KNOW IT IS NOT ENOUGH BECAUSE WHAT EVERY ONE OF YOU DID AND ARE STILL DOING IS SO MEANINGFUL. YES, IT IS SO MEANINGFUL THAT IT HAS BEEN A BIG SURPRISE TO DHS-INS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, OVER THE LAST SEVEN MONTHS I HAVE SEEN A LOT OF THINGS THAT I WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT COULD HAPPEN IN THIS COUNTRY. LOTS OF DISAPPOINTMENT, ANGER, HELPLESSNESS AND DESTROYED FAMILIES. BUT WITH THE POWER OF SUPPORT THAT I RECEIVED, ALL THAT BECAME A GOOD REASON TO PUT UP A MEANINGFUL FIGHT AGAINST A NEW TYPE OF RACISM AND INJUSTICE. MY COMMUNITY PUT UP AN EXAMPLE OF BEING A REAL AMERICAN, AND THAT SMALL VOICE HAS NOW BECOME SO BIG THAT EVEN THE ONES WHO DO NOT WANT TO LISTEN, END UP PAYING ATTENTION, AND THE SMALL TOWN THING HAS BECOME A NATIONAL THING. YES, MY FRIENDS, THIS FIGHT IS FAR FROM BEING OVER AND WHAT EVERY ONE OF YOU IS DOING OUT THERE MAKES THIS FIGHT POSSIBLE, STRONGER AND HOPEFUL. YOU HAVE TO KNOW, IF YOU WOULD NOT HAVE DONE WHAT YOU'VE DONE, I WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED SEVEN DAYS, MUCH LESS SEVEN MONTHS. I NEEDED THE STRENGTH YOU HAVE GIVEN ME TO GET OVER THE SHOCK AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

MY FRIENDS, I CAN TRY OVER AND OVER TO EXPLAIN WHAT IT MEANS TO ME TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BIG FAMILY. BUT NO WORD IS GOING TO BE ENOUGH FOR THAT. ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT THIS THING BROUGHT OUT

THE GOOD A LOT STRONGER AND WITH THE POWER OF WINING. I WANT ALL OF YOU TO KNOW THAT IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW HARD IT IS OR HOW HARD IT GETS, AS LONG AS YOU ARE OUT THERE HOLDING THAT LIGHT TO GUIDE ME OUT OF THIS DARKNESS, I WILL CONTINUE THIS WALK UNTIL WE ARE REUNITED.

I'M TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT WORDS TO EXPLAIN MY FEELINGS AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER OF THIS BIG FAMILY, BUT I AM UNABLE TO FIND THOSE WORDS. BUT WHEN THAT DAY COMES AND I'M ABLE TO GIVE EVERY ONE OF YOU THE HUG I MISS TO GIVE, THEN I WOULDN'T NEED ANY WORDS.

YES, SOMEONE TRIED TO DESTROY MY SMALL FAMILY, BUT YOU'VE GIVEN ME A BIG FAMILY THAT NO ONE COULD DREAM OF.

YES, SOMEONE TRIED TO TAKE LIVIA'S DADDY AWAY, BUT YOU GAVE HER MANY DADDYS.

YES, SOMEONE TRIED TO DESTROY MY FUTURE, MY DREAMS, MY BELIEFS, BUT YOU GAVE ME ENOUGH ENERGY TO NOT JUST DEFEND WHAT I HAVE, BUT ALSO TO BE ABLE TO TAKE THE FIGHT TO A LEVEL THAT OTHERS CAN FIND STRENGTH FROM.

YES, YOU GAVE ME THIS AND A LOT MORE. YOU DID THAT WITH EVERY LETTER I RECEIVED FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, WITH EVERY PHONE CALL, WITH EVERY MINUTE OF YOUR BUSY LIFE YOU CONTRIBUTED TO MY CAUSE. WITH EVERY DOLLAR YOU DROPPED INTO THE "FREE IBRAHIM" JAR, WITH EVERY SIGN YOU PUT IN YOUR YARD AND ON STORE FRONTS, WITH EVERY DISH YOU COOK ^{YOU} ~~TO~~ CONTRIBUTE TO MY FREEDOM, WITH EVERY CHURCH MEETING AND PRAYER, WITH EVERY FAMILY GATHERING, WITH EVERY "FREE IBRAHIM" T-SHIRT AND BUTTON YOU WEAR LETS THE OTHERS KNOW THAT YOU DID NOT FORGET ME AND ARE NOT GOING TO. and I'm ~~not~~ going to kip that in my main every mint of the day

I WANT TO SAY THANK YOU TO THE REPORTERS WHO GAVE FAIR JUDGEMENT TO MY STORY. AND THANK YOU TO THE COLUMNISTS WHO HAVE BECOME A PATIENT VOICE OF MY BIG FAMILY AND WHO STAND UP TO THIS INJUSTICE.

AND NOW IT IS SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING AND I AM TRYING TO FINISH THIS LETTER, BUT IT HAS BEEN MUCH HARDER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE. I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THIS ALL NIGHT AND LOOKING IN THE DICTIONARY TO FIND THE RIGHT WORDS, AND THINKING TO REMEMBER EVERYTHING I WANT TO SAY. BUT AFTER TRYING ALL NIGHT, I REALIZED THAT IT'S NEVER GOING TO BE ENOUGH AND I JUST HAVE TO WAIT TO EXPRESS MY FEELINGS WITH THAT HUG. I'M GOING TO ASK EVERY ONE OF YOU TO BE PATIENT WITH ME FOR THAT DAY TO COME.

MY FRIENDS, OVER THE LAST SEVEN MONTHS I HAVE SEEN A LOT OF DECENT FATHERS BEING TAKEN AWAY FROM A LOT OF AMERICAN CHILDREN. I WITNESSED LOTS OF FAMILIES BEING DESTROYED, AND NOT TOO MANY OF THEM WERE AS LUCKY AS ME TO HAVE ALL OF YOU OUT THERE. AND KNOWING THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS GOING TO HELP NOT JUST ME, BUT OTHERS WHO ARE IN THE SAME STRUGGLE, GIVES ME ONE MORE GOOD REASON TO CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO THE END. YES, THE FIGHT IS GOING TO CONTINUE NOT JUST TO TO THE END, BUT TO THE WIN!

YES, I'M THANKFUL TO GOD THAT HE GAVE ME THE OPORTUNITY TO KNOW ALL OF YOU, AND BE PART OF YOUR BIG FAMILY. I'M THANKFUL THAT MY DAUGHTER HAS A GOOD STORY TO TELL. I'M THANKFUL THAT EVEN THOUGH I AM LOCKED UP IN THIS DEEP HOLE, I STILL HAVE A POWERFUL VOICE OUT THERE.

I JUST HAVE TO SAY THANK YOU TO YOU ALL. I WILL BE WITH YOU NO MATTER WHAT. I'M GOING TO WAIT FOR OUR DAY TO COME AND UNTIL THEN, I WILL HOLD MY HEAD UP AND FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT THING. WITH MY BEST WISHES,

Love Ibrahim
Feb. 23-05