

Governor Maggie Hassan
State House
State of New Hampshire
Concord, N.H. 03301
March 3, 2015

Dear Governor Hassan

This letter concerns the appeal currently under way to grant the option of parole for Pamela Smart.

I write to you as a New Hampshire native, a lifelong supporter of women's rights, and of the rights of every individual to receive not only a fair trial. More than that, I write to you as one who believes that to view our fellow human beings with compassion not only serves those who receive our kindness, but contributes to the humanity of our society as a whole.

As you are no doubt aware, in 1990, at the age of 22, Pamela Smart was convicted of conspiring in the murder of her husband, Gregory Smart, and received the sentence of life without possibility of parole. She has now been incarcerated at Bedford Women's Correctional facility for 25 years. .

I do not write to revisit the verdict that found Pamela Smart guilty of murder. It is not for me to do so. I write as a citizen, and as a woman who has followed the story of Pamela Smart in the years since her arrest and conviction—aware that each of the young men involved in that crime have either been released from prison or are likely to be soon—and to make the plea that Pamela Smart, too, be granted the chance to live what remains of her life free from the walls of the prison where she has now spent more than half her life.

It is not irrelevant here that Pamela Smart has made productive use of her time at Bedford—earning two advanced degrees, working in constructive ways with inmates. But no doubt, she could be a far more productive citizen outside of prison than within it.

I will add here a single personal note. Twenty five years ago, in my profession as a writer—living, at the time, in New Hampshire—the Smart case inspired me to write a novel titled *To Die For*, which was published in 1991, and adapted for a film starring Nicole Kidman in 1994.

While I have never denied that it was the Smart case that initially suggested the story line of my novel, I have taken pains, whenever asked about this, to reiterate that *To Die For* is a work of fiction, and in no way meant to serve as an account, even a highly fictionalized one, of the Smart case. I never researched the case in any way beyond reading a few newspaper articles early on, and in fact, my novel was virtually finished, and sold to a publisher, months before the trial got under way.

At the time the jury reached its verdict in the Smart case, my novel was a full year away from publication. But if the existence of the film adaptation of the book has contributed in any way to a public perception of Pamela Smart as a ruthlessly ambitious killer, I will say : this was not my intent.

I do not know Pamela Smart. The character I created on the pages of my novel came from my own imagination. To whatever extent the existence of that film affected attitudes towards Pamela Smart over the years , I can only reiterate: Nicole Kidman did not play Pamela Smart in *To Die For*. That character was a creation of my imagination. And to whatever extent Pamela Smart's chances for a fair parole hearing may have been affected by my novel, I trust you will do what you can to rectify that situation by giving her the same second chance granted the others involved in that case.

With respect

Joyce Maynard