

(C O P Y)

Bensenville, Ill.
June 8, 1934.

My Dear President Roosevelt:

May I ask you to help me? I was born and raised in this country of ours and was always taught a love of justice and decency. I am the mother of five children - the oldest is 10 years. My baby is 18 months. I still want to teach my babies the principals and fundaments of being a good American. May I tell you my story? I

In December of 1933 my husband (who is employed on the railroad here in Bensenville) started to sell wines and liquors as a side line. He stopped payments on the home we were buying and started to run around with women. He abused me and the children saying he hated us. I had to have him arrested and placed under a peace bond to force him to stay here. He was planning to run away with this woman.

We lived in a town called River Grove. By the queerest way I found he had committed bigamy. I had to move as I was annoyed so much at night and all kinds of mean things done to me and my children. In moving out here in Bensenville I thought I was moving away from it all and I found myself in the midst of the whole crowd.

When I went to the county in which he was married and verified my thoughts, I went to the States Attorney's office for help. I saw the license and it was his signature. (You see when he was at home he always kept telling me he wanted a divorce. I couldn't at the time understand why.) He even went so far as to say if I didn't give him one he would commit bigamy.

The man in the States Attorney's office (called Mr. Meyers) listened to my story and issued a warrant for his arrest. He had married under the name of Arthur. (His given name was Walter). They locked him up. All the time he was locked up his friends kept annoying me and the children. If I went to the store they would come and knock on the doors and windows and frighten my children to death. Every time the children's daddy visited us he had a man along and he would only stay a short time.

The trial came up. I was not given a chance to tell my story. The Judge was a Judge Johnson. The States Attorney's office appointed me a lawyer. He asked for a continuance until the 6th of June to give them a chance to try to find this Arthur Peterson so he said. Well he also said to me you catch him living with this woman and we will arrest them both. You see she is a married woman with 3 children. I had everything ready and when I called the Police they laughed at me and told me to call the States Attorney's office. So I went back to Mr. Myers and told him. He listened again and said that the Police were slow in finding out things and he would look it up and come and see me Monday sure. He never came. The 6th of June came and I called up the Judge and he told me the case was postponed till the 20th of June. My husband was supposed to pay me \$40 (by a court order on every 2nd and 18th of the month. We rec'd nothing on the 2nd. My babies were hungry. We had no bread for 3 days. My neighbors gave me some. On the 6th day my husband comes and gives me \$20. his order was issued in the County of Cook where I was living at that time.

When I protested to my lawyer in Chicago he said I was foolish to press the bigamy charge. I wouldn't receive no money and anyhow I couldn't have him tried on that as this was a different county. My husband said he would pay me \$5 more and he had to pay the lawyer \$25. That money was paid for something.

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My children and I must suffer for his wrong. When he came the last time he talked like he was going to take my babies from me. He doesn't love those children Mr. President - he just pretends to.

President Roosevelt I dearly love my babies. I have always tried to be a good mother and wife. It is not of malice that I wish to press these charges. It is purely a love of truth and righteousness.

If people in our country (americans) can do such things and get away with it, then we do not need laws and etc. If I went some place and tried to be alone with these kiddies I could not get help from the county.

Will you please help a mother who is only trying to do right. He has protection from the Police. They tell me I am crazy. I am not. If you were to talk to me you would know I am telling you the truth. A great many people in this town seem to know he has done this and are helping him in protecting him from the law. They seem to think it funny and smart. To me it is a serious thing and a mighty wrong to the children, myself and himself.

Today I found the case had been dismissed. Without a hearing and me understanding it to come up on the 20th.

Mr. President, as a citizen I think I am entitled to my rightfull dues. At the rate he is going he will soon think he is a law unto himself and will completely ignore this court order for the money to support his children. Justice is being ridiculed in this case and the law I always understood was to be respected.

I want to keep my faith in my Country . I want to love and respect its laws and I want also to have my babies to care for and to raise as respectful citizens of our United States but if this wrong goes unheeded the next one will be worse.

I will be so anxiously awaiting an early reply.

With a mother's dearest wish for your good health and wonderful work to continue, I remain

Most sincerely,

(signed) Mrs. Walter M. Peterson.