



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

August 27, 1982

Mr. Charlton Heston
2859 Coldwater Canyon Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90210

Dear Chuck:

Thank you for your letter of August 9, concerning the criminal conviction of Mr. Adil Shahryar.

I can, of course, appreciate the distress that a criminal conviction and incarceration must cause to those close to an individual defendant. I am afraid, however, that it would not be appropriate for me to intervene in this matter in any way. Mr. Shahryar was convicted of serious crimes after a full trial before a jury of his peers, and was sentenced by the judge according to law. I understand that he is pursuing an appeal of his conviction.

As a trusted and respected friend of longstanding, you know that I would not lightly turn aside a request from you. In circumstances such as these, however, we must rely on the American criminal justice system. That system requires the prosecution to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, and affords the accused every opportunity to defend himself. It is the best system I know of for vindicating the innocent.

I know you will understand that I am in no position to do anything other than abide by the verdict of that system.

I hope that all is well with you and Lydia. You know I join many others -- and the American people generally -- in applauding the public service you continue to render on so many different fronts. We in Washington hope that your selfless activities will continue to inspire others.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

William French Smith
Attorney General