

Honorable John F. Walter
United States District Court
Central District of California
312N. Spring Street
Room 176, Courtroom 16
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: UNITED STATES v. MELVYN I. WEISS
NO.CR 05-587 (E) – JFW

Dear Your Honor.

My name is Fernando W. Maurette. I have been a National Congressman for Argentina during the period 1995-1999, Defense Secretary (2002-2003), President of the Foundation Banco de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (1999-2002), Secretary of the Interior Minister (1993-1995), Director of the Banco de la Ciudad de Bs. As. (1989-1993).

Currently I'm chair of the La Pascuala S.A., Winery and Vineyards, y vicepresident of COFINTE S.A. Hotel Huacalera, .

I'm also Academic Honoris Causa of the Academia Nacional del Tango and I have chaired for 15 years the Fundacion Rioplatense, an NGO dedicated to social and direct action within the city of Buenos Aires (food and education for 300 personas every day), and also dedicated to research in gender studies, discrimination issues and institutional strengthening.

I am married to Dolores Dolberg and I have three sons.

I first met Melvyn Weiss at a gathering of the Anti Defamation League in Palm Beach in the year 2000. I attended this symposium invited by the chairman of the ADL, Mr. Abraham Forman. Previous to our first meeting I was familiar with Mr. Weiss' work in Argentina, specifically in the project Hatikva that financed the purchase of a lot where the Israeli Embassy used to stand before it was destroyed in a terrorist attack in 1992.

The lot was bought and made into a memorial park, a true symbol of democratic values, cultural and religious diversity and peace. I share with Mr Weiss these ideals and I admire his leadership when it comes to realizing them. Not only his financial support, but more importantly the time and passion he put into this project are to be stressed, and there is no doubt in my mind that without his action the project would not have been made a reality.

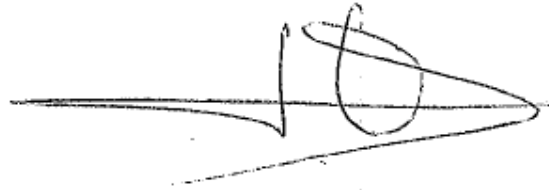
When I met Mr. Weiss I met a great human being, not only in the field of human rights and the defense of freedom, but also a sensitive and giving person. I remember him talking about his love of art and the work of Pablo Picasso in particular. I also remember him telling me about his humble childhood in the Bronx and that his long work hours alongside his father would not allow him to visit museums and enjoy art.

When he learned about Argentina's historic and great appreciation of art, and knowing that many humble people in this country were not able to enjoy art, he proposed to lend his outstanding private collection of 138 Picassos so that it would be exhibited in my country. His one condition was that the exhibition had to be free of charge for everybody. We made it happen and the collection was exhibit from March 19th. to April 20th. of 2001 in the Teatro Argentino de La Plata and over 200,000 people attended it, the majority of which were children and humble people. Mel also authorized a special tour for the blind and made available ramps for the disabled.

When Mel found out about the work my NGO, the Fundacion Rioplatense, in soup kitchens he did not hesitate in offering me his support and his financial collaboration. Needless to say his support is vital and infinitely appreciated by the children and families that re the beneficiaries of this service.

All this being said, I conclude by saying that I think Mel Weiss is an exceptionally generous and caring person, whose ideals I admire and whose support I will always be grateful to.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fernando W. Maurette'. The signature is stylized with a large loop and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Fernando W. Maurette