

United States Senate

February 7, 2022

The Honorable Merrick Garland
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Garland,

On May 28, 2020, Montez Lee set fire to a pawn shop in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and murdered a 30-year-old father of five.

In August 2020, the United States Attorney's Office in Minnesota indicted Lee on one count of Arson and he pleaded guilty on July 22, 2021. The sentencing guidelines called for a sentence of around 20 years. But the U.S. Attorney's office filed a Sentencing Memorandum asking for half this time. Most shockingly, the U.S. Attorney *defended* Montez Lee and expressed sympathy for his murderous arson because Lee's crime was committed during the BLM riots.

Showing leniency towards a career criminal who committed murder is bad enough. But justifying the murder because the career criminal shares the Biden Administration's politics is beyond the pale.

The American people deserve to know whether leniency for left-wing murderers is the official policy of the Biden Department of Justice, or whether this travesty was a one-off.

Please provide answers to the following questions by February 21, 2022.

1. Does the Attorney General believe participation in a riot is a basis for leniency in sentencing individuals for violent crimes?
2. In the Sentencing Memorandum, the government concludes that Montez Lee "does not appear to pose a danger to the public." The Sentencing Memorandum stated that Lee, who was 25 when he committed this crime, had been convicted for burglary, domestic violence, and theft. The government also acknowledged that, in his domestic violence case, Montez Lee violently ruptured his girlfriend's eardrum. Given these convictions, all committed in a truncated period before Lee was even 25 and which put him at Criminal History Level IV (out of VI), please describe how the government concluded that Lee posed no danger to the community.
3. Please provide all communications between the United States Attorney's Office for Minnesota and any political appointees at the Department of Justice regarding the sentencing recommendation for Montez Lee.

Sincerely,



Tom Cotton
United States Senator