



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE

October 4, 1996

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter of recommendation is being provided by the Special Agent in Charge of the District for and on behalf of Senior Special Agent Nick Jacobellis. Agent Jacobellis has been honorably separated from active duty and has been placed on permanent federal disability as a result of sustaining three line of duty injuries.

Agent Jacobellis joined the Customs Service in 1983. He worked for the Special Agent in Charge, JFK Airport, and the Office of the Resident Agent in Charge, Long Island, New York. While stationed in New York, Agent Jacobellis participated in a six-month undercover operation gathering intelligence.

Agent Jacobellis transferred to the Office of the Special Agent in Charge of Miami, Florida in 1985. He was worked in the Freighter Intelligence Search Team which covered the Port of Miami. During this assignment, Agent Jacobellis participated in several successful drug interdictions.

In April of 1986, Agent Jacobellis was promoted to the position of Air Officer with Customs Air Branch in Miami. As an air officer, Agent Jacobellis flew on board Customs interdiction aircraft. He participated in numerous patrols and air interdiction missions in South Florida and the Bahamas. Additionally, as an air officer, Agent Jacobellis developed informants in the private aircraft community and conducted air smuggling investigations.

In November of 1986, Agent Jacobellis was promoted to the position of Special Agent. He was assigned to a newly formed air smuggling investigative group. Agent Jacobellis excelled as an agent. He developed additional informants and investigations which developed into significant prosecutions of air smugglers. One of Agent Jacobellis' investigations netted an air smuggling organization documented as having smuggled 6.9 tons of cocaine and 6 tons of marijuana. As a result of his investigation, seven persons were arrested; and an exotic car dealership with twenty eight vehicles, a vessel, five aircraft including a Cessna Citation jet, jewelry, furs, an exotic animal and 37 firearms were seized. Agent Jacobellis was responsible in his other investigations for the seizure of an additional fifteen drug planes and the arrests of many violators.

In 1988, Agent Jacobellis proposed the formation of an air investigative unit utilizing undercover agents and informants for the infiltration of Colombian based drug smuggling organizations. This undercover operation was also designed to provide sophisticated undercover support and technical assistance to other Customs offices and other agencies that required the talents of such a specialized group.

In October of 1988, Agent Jacobellis was granted authorization to establish this covert air unit, but with no funding or equipment. Using his informants and contacts in the private aircraft community, Agent Jacobellis organized a cadre of street sources, contract pilots and flight crews, and ground personnel. This group provided an assortment of sea planes, jet aircraft and light twin engine aircraft. With this cadre, Agent Jacobellis mounted numerous covert operations where significant shipments of cocaine were extracted from various locations in Colombia and brought to different cities in the United States. In these cities, controlled deliveries of the shipments of cocaine were safely and successfully executed.

This undercover operation was credited with the transportation and seizure of over 25,746 pounds of cocaine, 11,000 pounds of marijuana. Some seventy violators were arrested with a 100% conviction rate. Additionally, the operation netted seizures of \$3 million, one aircraft, vehicles and weapons. Under Agent Jacobellis' operational direction, contract pilots and crews flew some 30,000 air miles under dangerous conditions without loss of life or an adverse incident.

It was during one such operation that Agent Jacobellis was injured in the line of duty when a Sea Plane was forced to crash land after experiencing engine trouble, following the successful completion of a mission in New Mexico. Agent Jacobellis was again injured during one of three trips to the Colombian Coast in an undercover vessel during a tropical storm in August of 1991.

In February of 1995, the U.S. Customs Service granted Agent Jacobellis the move of his choice to . While assigned to the Office of Investigations, Agent Jacobellis initiated an undercover investigation of a long-time criminal who operated in the and areas of . During this operation Agent Jacobellis purchased automatic rifles and a silenced pistol from the subject. This led to a successful federal prosecution and removal of this threat to the community. It was during this investigation that Agent Jacobellis was injured again in a motor vehicle accident while returning an undercover vehicle from an assignment. Agent Jacobellis was struck by a vehicle which ran a stop sign.

In November of 1995, Agent Jacobellis transferred to the Office of Investigations. In January of 1996, Agent Jacobellis was notified that he would no longer be allowed to remain on active duty in his position of a Senior Special Agent due to the result of the effects of the series of physical injuries that he sustained in the line of duty.

Prior to that time, Customs Service supervisors and managers had been able to accommodate Agent Jacobellis in his duties, allowing for his injuries and limitations. Agent Jacobellis had

his heart in his work, though he experienced varying degrees of pain and discomfort from his injuries. He showed great devotion to his work, whereas others would likely have taken leave.

Throughout his career, Agent Jacobellis received several outstanding evaluations; sustained superior service award in 1987, 1988, 1991, 1992 and 1995 that totalled \$6,750; promotions; letters of commendation from federal prosecutors, state prosecutors and the Commissioner of Customs. Agent Jacobellis received the International Narcotic Enforcement Officers Award of Honor in November of 1992.

As a result of the physical injuries sustained in three line of duty accidents, Agent Jacobellis has been honorably relieved from active duty with the U.S. Customs Office of Investigations. He has been receiving full disability pay from the U.S. Department of Labor since July 15, 1996.

I know Nick Jacobellis to be a hard-working and honorable man. He has a natural talent and zest for law enforcement work. I highly recommend him as a capable, effective and personable man.

Sincerely,