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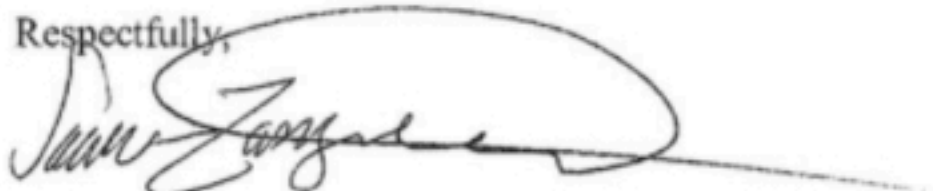
Dear ESPN:

This letter is in response to a statement made by your employee, Mr. Stephen A. Smith, during the airing of "First Take" on June 21, 2017. During that episode Mr. Smith said the following statement while discussing the President of the New York Knicks Phil Jackson, "His very first move as executive was to sign Lamar Odom ...WHO WAS ON CRACK"! Let's put aside the fact that Lamar passed all the required physicals and medical tests necessary to play in the league. Let's put aside the fact that Mr. Smith attempted to qualify his statement by saying how much he likes Lamar, and wishes him well in his recovery. Let us look at what this statement does, not only to Lamar, but to any and all professional athletes that are struggling with addiction.

The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) has defined addiction as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking, and use, despite harmful consequences. Mr. Smith chose to jokingly disparaged Lamar for a having a disease. Mr. Smith chose to shout out the fact that Lamar was sick, and to use his disease as the butt of a joke. To say that his conduct was outrageous and unacceptable does not scratch the surface. Think about the others that are battling addiction. Those that have not had the strength or opportunity to share their struggle like Lamar. Imagine the effect this grotesque statement would have on any young athlete who is privately fighting this disease. To become the punch line of a vulgar joke.

Since his release from the hospital Lamar has been actively working within the addiction community. On June 20, 2017, the day before the show, Lamar travelled to a rehab facility in Davie, Florida. Here he spoke to the patients at Live Free Institute and shared his story with young impressionable minds. We hope those at ESPN will actively voice their disdain for Mr. Smith's inappropriate statement and take the proper action to support those that are fighting this disease. We would hope that your network would use this situation as an opportunity to become more actively involved in this cause.

Respectfully,



Saam Zangeneh, *Counsel for Lamar Odom*