United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2012

Mr. Michael Lynton
Chairman and CEO
Sony Pictures Entertainment
10202 W. Washington Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232-3195

Dear Mr. Lynton:

We write to express our deep disappointment with the movie *Zero Dark Thirty*. We believe the film is grossly inaccurate and misleading in its suggestion that torture resulted in information that led to the location of Usama bin Laden.

We understand that the film is fiction, but it opens with the words "based on first-hand accounts of actual events" and there has been significant media coverage of the CIA's cooperation with the screenwriters. As you know, the film graphically depicts CIA officers repeatedly torturing detainees and then credits these detainees with providing critical lead information on the courier that led to Usama Bin Laden. Regardless of what message the filmmakers intended to convey, the movie clearly implies that the CIA's coercive interrogation techniques were effective in eliciting important information related to a courier for Usama Bin Laden. We have reviewed CIA records and know that this is incorrect.

Zero Dark Thirty is factually inaccurate, and we believe that you have an obligation to state that the role of torture in the hunt for Usama Bin Laden is not based on the facts, but rather part of the film's fictional narrative.

Pursuant to the Senate Intelligence Committee's recently-adopted Study of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation program, Committee staff reviewed more than 6 million pages of records from the Intelligence Community. Based on that review, Senators Feinstein and Levin released the following information on April 30, 2012, regarding the Usama Bin Laden operation:

- The CIA did not first learn about the existence of the Usama Bin Laden courier from CIA detainees subjected to coercive interrogation techniques. Nor did the

CIA discover the courier's identity from detainees subjected to coercive techniques. No detainee reported on the courier's full name or specific whereabouts, and no detainee identified the compound in which Usama Bin Laden was hidden. Instead, the CIA learned of the existence of the courier, his true name and location through means unrelated to the CIA detention and interrogation program.

- Information to support this operation was obtained from a wide variety of intelligence sources and methods. CIA officers and their colleagues throughout the Intelligence Community sifted through massive amounts of information, identified possible leads, tracked them down, and made considered judgments based on all of the available intelligence.

- The CIA detainee who provided the most significant information about the courier provided the information prior to being subjected to coercive interrogation techniques.

In addition to the information above, former CIA Director Leon Panetta wrote Senator McCain in May 2011, stating:

> "…no detainee in CIA custody revealed the facilitator/courier's full true name or specific whereabouts. This information was discovered through other intelligence means."

We are fans of many of your movies, and we understand the special role that movies play in our lives, but the fundamental problem is that people who see *Zero Dark Thirty* will believe that the events it portrays are facts. The film therefore has the potential to shape American public opinion in a disturbing and misleading manner. Recent public opinion polls suggest that a narrow majority of Americans believe that torture can be justified as an effective form of intelligence gathering. This is false. We know that cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of prisoners is an unreliable and highly ineffective means of gathering intelligence.

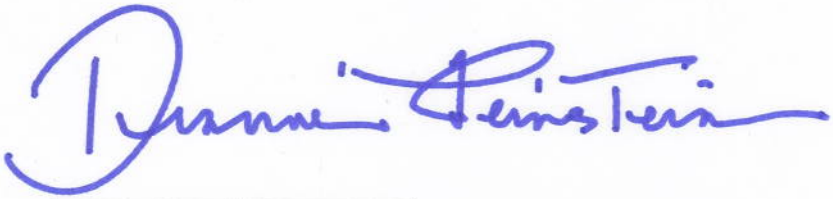
The use of torture should be banished from serious public discourse for these reasons alone, but more importantly, because it is a violation of the Geneva Conventions, because it is an affront to America's national honor, and because it is wrong. The use of torture in the fight against terrorism did severe damage to America's values and standing that cannot be justified or expunged. It remains a stain on our national conscience. We cannot afford to go back to these dark times, and with the release of *Zero Dark Thirty*, the filmmakers and your production

studio are perpetuating the myth that torture is effective. You have a social and moral obligation to get the facts right.

Please consider correcting the impression that the CIA's use of coercive interrogation techniques led to the operation against Usama Bin Laden. It did not.

Thank you for your assistance on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
Ex-Officio Member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

John McCain
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
Ex-Officio Member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence