

Brittney Griner Makes First Statement

Intro clip here

Brittney Griner has finally spoken out for the first time since she returned to the US...

Nearly 10 months after she was arrested in Russia, the WNBA star posted a lengthy statement on her Instagram on Friday...

And she had a lot to say...

Among the things Brittney said was a promise to return to playing basketball this season...

She started the post by writing that it felt so good to be home...

She said that the last 10 months had been a battle at every turn, during which she had to dig deep to keep faith...

Brittney said that it was the love she received from the many people supporting her that helped keep her going...

And she took the opportunity to thank all of those people from the bottom of her heart...

The list of people she singled out for thanks was pretty HUGE...

And it helped to show just HOW MANY people were fighting for her...

The first name on the list was Brittney's wife, Cherelle Griner...

She then thanked the rest of her family, as well as her agent Lindsay Kagawa Colas, Casey Wasserman, and the whole Wasserman team...

She then gave a shout-out to her basketball team and the whole WNBA...

After that, she thanked her Russian legal team and all the activists, campaigners, and grassroots organizers for their work...

Included in this was everyone involved in the *Bring our Families Home* Campaign...

She finished by expressing her sincere gratitude to President Biden and Vice President Harris...

And she extended her thanks to their entire administration...

She acknowledged the President's commitment to bringing ALL Americans home...

This included Paul Whelan, a former US Marine, who was arrested in the Moscow area in December 2018...

He was accused of spying on Russia...

And in June 2020, he was convicted of espionage and sentenced to an INSANE 16 years in Russian prison...

He was originally part of the prisoner swap deal between Russia and the US that brought Brittney home...

However, only Brittney came back, after Russia later refused to free both US nationals...

It has since been reported that talks regarding the freeing of Paul are still ongoing...

And in her Instagram post, Brittney addressed the President directly...

She promised that she would use her platform to help his efforts in any way she could...

She then encouraged everyone who had played a part in bringing her back to continue their efforts...

She wrote that all Americans must be able to return, as all families deserve to be whole...

Regarding her own family, she stated her desire to enjoy the holidays with them as she transitions home...

For that transition she thanked the team in San Antonio for helping her adjust...

And she rounded the post off by writing about something she wanted to make very clear...

She announced that she intended to play for her team Phoenix Mercury this season...

In doing so, she hoped to be able to thank everyone who supported her in person...

Attached to the long post of gratitude were two INCREDIBLE photos...

The first showed Brittney descending the steps of a plane back onto US soil...

The second showed her reunited with Cherelle in a loving hug...

We can only imagine what both women were feeling when they were FINALLY brought together again...

Cherelle also posted on Instagram following her wife's return...

On December 10, she shared a collage of the many faces who'd helped Brittney get back home...

Cherelle wrote about how her heart felt whole again thanks to everyone's collective efforts...

She described the care that people felt toward Brittney, whether a friend or a stranger, as humanity in its purest form...

She wrote that the couple were beginning their journey toward healing their minds, bodies, and spirits...

And then she went on to thank an even longer list of the people who had worked so HARD to get Brittney her freedom...

She finished by repeating Brittney's appeal to people to keep the fight going for the freedom of ALL Americans...

And it looks like that mission means more than just a post on social media to the couple...

After the TRAUMATIZING experience the last 10 months had forced upon them, they are now determined to do what they can...

That is according to an ESPN interview with Lindsay, the agent that Brittney had previously thanked in her first statement...

Lindsay told the interviewer that Brittney and Cherelle planned to raise attention for other families with loved ones detained abroad...

And she once again highlighted the case of Brittney's fellow prisoner Paul...

The issue of Paul's ongoing negotiations was also raised in a statement from Secretary of State Antony Blinken...

The Secretary, while celebrating Brittney's release, also pointed out that Paul and his family were still needlessly suffering...

And he claimed that despite continued efforts from the US, the Russian Government was unwilling to bring Paul's imprisonment to an end...

The Secretary said that he wished that Paul had been on the plane with Brittney...

But the US would continue their efforts to bring Paul and all other US nationals home to their loved ones...

Obviously, it's sadly true to say that Paul's family are still suffering without Paul...

But INCREDIBLY, during their dark time, they still managed to find it in them to celebrate Brittney's return...

Paul's brother David Whelan gave a statement to CNN...

In which he said that he was SO GLAD that Brittney was on her way back...

... and that he could only imagine the joy Brittney must feel now that she's back with her loved ones in time for the holidays...

And Brittney definitely did start to enjoy her family reunion the moment she got back to them...

Less than a week after her plane landed, she was reported to have been able to share some time with her family at Fort Sam Houston...

CNN reported that she was seen drinking Dr Pepper and eating a barbecue FEAST cooked by her dad...

She was also reported to have gotten a haircut soon after returning...

The haircut was given to her by the San Antonio Spurs barber, and it cleaned up the so-called Russian Fade she had previously...

In her first weekend back, Brittney even did a light workout in a pair of Chuck Taylor sneakers, and played some basketball...

Her agent Lindsay told CNN that it was encouraging to see Brittney immediately picking up the ball and going for a dunk...

She also talked about Brittney's excitement at being able to play again...

She then also added that Brittney had received a great deal of psychological support during her first week at Fort Sam Houston...

Vedant Patel, US State Department deputy spokesperson, provided more information on Brittney's care in a news briefing last Friday...

She said that the US was now focused on ensuring that Brittney and her family's well-being was being prioritized...

And that all available assistance would be offered to them...

A spokesperson for the National Security Council, John Kirby, described Brittney as being in good spirits and incredibly gracious...

And I think we can all agree that after what she had to endure over most of the last year, this news came as a HUGE relief...

It all started last February, when Brittney traveled to rejoin her Russian team during the WNBA off-season...

She was detained at an airport in Moscow after being accused of bringing illegal substances to the country...

This was due to the contents of two vape cartridges that Russian authorities found on her carry-on luggage...

In August, Brittney was found guilty by a Russian court on charges of smuggling...

She was given an UNBELIEVABLE nine years in a penal colony - nearly the maximum possible sentence...

In October, her appeal was denied, and she was relocated to a colony near the small town of Yavas...

The colony had a reputation for some of the WORST conditions of any Russian facility...

And after months of effort, a deal was finally struck to exchange Brittney for imprisoned arms dealer Viktor Bout...

A news conference was held by the President on December 8...

And at the conference, he announced that Brittney was on a plane and would be back in the US within 24 hours...

Cherelle was also at the news conference, having played a MAJOR part in keeping the White House focused on getting her wife back...

After so many months of effort and emotional distress, Cherelle summed up her feelings in one sentence...

She said that it was just a happy day...

And now that they are reunited, the couple are determined to ensure there will be MORE happy days to come for other American families...

But what do you guys think?

Did you follow the whole SHOCKING story of Brittney's imprisonment?

And are you relieved that she's finally back?

Let me know in the comments below...