



Grenier Law Group PLLC

1400 L Street, NW, Suite 420
Washington, DC 20005-3509

Office: 202.768.9600
Tollfree: 844.210.0333
Fax: 202.768.9604

www.grenierlawgroup.com

Peter C. Grenier

Direct: 202.768.9599

Email: pgrenier@grenierlawgroup.com

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PRESS STATEMENT CONCERNING OCTOBER 12, 2015, METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT INCIDENT INVOLVING JASON GOOLSBY AND MICHAEL BROWN

Good afternoon. My name is Peter Grenier, of Grenier Law Group. I want to thank the University of the District of Columbia for hosting this conference, especially Dr. Ronald Mason, the President of the University, Dean Shelley Broderick, the dean of the law school, and Dr. Diane Phillips, the Chief Executive Officer of the community college, not only for their graciousness in offering the use of their facilities, but their strong support for these young men. I would also like to thank Dr. Marco Clark, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Richard Wright Public Charter School For Journalism and Media Arts, for sharing so much about these two young men.

Standing to my left is 18 year old Jason Goolsby. Standing to my right is 18 year old Michael Brown. The reason we are here today is because three days ago, on the evening of October 12, 2015, Jason and Michael were brutalized by the Metropolitan Police Department for literally no reason other than the fact that they are black. This incident occurred just minutes after they had spent time at a local "bootcamp" in Southeast D.C., where they were going through orientation to become volunteers to help troubled youths, and to guide them in, among other things, safe sex and preventing AIDS. Within minutes of completing that orientation to give freely of their time to help others, they were treated like common criminals, handcuffed, physically and psychologically brutalized, and then told almost two hours later, "It was a misunderstanding. You are free to go." No charges, no warnings, and no apology. The main involved MPD officer looked Jason in the eye and said that a woman who had seen Jason and his two friends at an ATM machine called the police and said she felt, quote, "uncomfortable."

Before discussing the incident, I want you to know who these fine young men are. Without exception, they exemplify all of the values that each of us wishes to instill in our own children.

Jason Goolsby is a freshman at the University of the District of Columbia. He is a proud graduate of the charter class of the Richard Wright Public Charter School for Journalism and Media Arts, which is just a few blocks from where this incident took place. Richard Wright's educational focus is to create great writers, journalists and productive citizens, and to empower students to

become creative, innovative thinkers regardless of their ethnicity, socioeconomic status or gender. Jason was born with God-given musical talent, which he discovered at the tender age of 6, and beginning early in his career at Richard Wright he started to use those talents in the most positive ways one can imagine. In a few minutes, I will be showing you a music video written, produced and performed by Jason, entitled "My School Is So Awesome," written about his high school. I encourage you to listen carefully to each and every lyric of that song, and I will let you draw your own conclusions about the values embodied by Jason in his music. He wrote and produced that video while in the 9th Grade.

Jason was an Ambassador for his high school. As an Ambassador, he was part of a group invited by First Lady Michelle Obama to participate in a Career in Music and Film Symposium at the White House.

Jason has been an ambassador for DC Showoff, which is a youth social marketing campaign that encourages DC youth to share their aspirations, dreams, talents, friendships, and personal style via social media. The campaign engages youth in activities that develop their leadership skills and cultivates self-awareness in their decision-making.

Jason played on his high school football and basketball teams.

When he started high school, he was often picked on and bullied on his way to or from school. One time, while he was on his way to pick up some medicine for his brother, he was confronted and bullied by some neighborhood thugs. He saw a nearby police officer, and begged him for help. The police officer would not do anything to help him.

If you walk down the halls of Richard Wright High School – as I recently did – there are numerous pictures of Jason on the walls. His moral compass is impeccable. His desire to help other teen youths in this city is unparalleled. In fact, in mid-May he attended an open meeting with Mayor Muriel Bowser. He did so because he cares about and loves this city. He actually asked her a question about the police in the District, and while acknowledging that many others his age have problems, he wanted to know how she was going to go about controlling the police in the District, in the wake of many stories about police misconduct that have made national news.

In a few minutes, you will see photos of Jason performing at the Washington Convention Center, at the D.C. Education Festival.

Michael Brown is a senior at Richard Wright. He, too, has given of himself in so many ways. As I mentioned earlier, just minutes before the incident that brings us together today, Michael also had gone through an orientation at a bootcamp for troubled teens, training to become a volunteer counselor in the areas of safe sex and preventing AIDS.

Michael plans on attending college next year, focusing on graphic design and marketing.

Michael also enjoys acting, and has even gone so far as to put his acting towards doing good for society. I will be showing you a video, featuring Michael, which is a public service announcement against texting and driving. I will also show you photos of Michael at the White House, also at the invitation of First Lady Michelle Obama, for the Career in Music and Film Symposium she hosted.

Like Jason, Michael has zero criminal history.

In the late afternoon on Monday, October 12, Jason, Michael, and another friend got together and headed over to the bootcamp I mentioned earlier. They were there to go through orientation in order to become volunteers helping troubled youths. The woman in charge of the program was very appreciative of their willingness to volunteer, and she took them out for a quick meal.

Jason had a studio session scheduled that evening, for which he would have to pay \$35.00. He had \$15.00 in his wallet, so he and his friends walked across the street to the CitiBank at the corner of 6th and Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., for Jason to use the ATM machine. There is a walk-in vestibule, and as you walk in, on your right there are two ATM machines. They went in, Jason pulled out his ATM card and was about to withdraw money from his account. At that time he received a text message from the studio owner, saying that something had come up, and he had to postpone until the next evening.

As Jason was contemplating whether to go ahead and withdraw money from the ATM, he saw a family of three, a mother, a father, and a baby in a stroller, coming towards the bank, clearly intending to use the ATM machine. He saw that they might need help getting the stroller through the door, so he instinctively went over and held the door open for them. That family is white.

Seconds later, he overheard the woman say to her husband that she had forgotten something in her car. The family left. No words were exchanged between Jason and his friends, on the one hand, and the family, on the other hand.

Jason and his friends then left, and walked left out of the bank heading towards 7th Street. They crossed Pennsylvania Avenue, and continued to walk left. Jason was heading to a Metrobus stop near a Subway sandwich shop, to catch the 90 bus to go visit his brother at Howard University. As Jason was crossing 8th Street, S.E., suddenly he saw a police SUV driving at a very high rate of speed towards him, which he perceived was trying to run him over. He jumped up onto the curb just in time to avoid being struck by the vehicle. He had absolutely no idea why a police vehicle would drive directly at him, but was scared he was going to be run over.

The vehicle stopped, and a white MPD police officer got out of the car. He had one hand on his gun, and had a pepper spray can in his other hand. He told Jason to get down on the ground or he would pepper spray him. Jason responded that he had not done anything wrong, and that he was not going to get down because he knew what would happen to him if he did, meaning that he would be seriously injured by the officer.

Jason had a backpack on his back, with both arms through the straps, so the backpack was squarely on his back. He had a pair of light blue Beats headphones on as well. He was wearing a white tee shirt, designed by his brother, and a jean jacket. It was daylight.

Jason was well aware of the Freddy Gray incident, as well as numerous other stories of police brutality. He truly believed the officer was going to shoot him, since in his mind the officer had just tried to run him over with his car.

Something is seriously wrong with a society where an innocent young black man feels safer trying to not be in the hands of a police officer, than being in the hands of a police officer. And that is exactly what prompted Jason to run – fear for his own life. He saw a hand on a gun and a hand on a pepper spray can, wielded by a man who had just tried to run him over.

So he ran for his safety, not wanting to die and become yet another casualty of police misconduct. He knew he had done nothing wrong. Jason has never been arrested in his life, let alone charged with a single crime.

The police officer eventually tackled him – he had done nothing wrong. The horrific videotape of the incident speaks loudest about what happened next. Jason felt that the officer was trying to break his arm, and he was screaming in pain, as we all can clearly hear on that video.

The videotape was taken by Michael Brown, who repeatedly was yelling that Jason had done nothing wrong. The police also mistreated Michael, as you can see in the video. We have a full copy of the video, which continues well after Michael is attacked by the police.

For almost two hours, Jason and Michael sat on the ground, their hands shackled behind their backs, having done absolutely nothing wrong. Jason repeatedly asked the police officers – there were about 6 on the scene – what he had done, and they refused to tell him anything.

All of the involved police officers were white.

Eventually a supervisor from the MPD arrived at the scene. After almost two hours, the officers removed the handcuffs from Jason and Michael, and told them they were free to go. They said it was, quote, a “misunderstanding.”

Once he was unshackled, Jason again asked the officers what he had done and why this happened. The officer who had originally also run him over, chased him, and almost broken his arm, said this:

“A woman called and said that you made her feel uncomfortable.”

That is what caused this unspeakable series of events that will forever scar Jason and Michael.

And it all happened because these young men are black. Under our laws, being black does not constitute probable cause to arrest or detain someone. Under our laws, being black does not constitute a reasonable or articulable suspicion to arrest or to detain someone.

I have zero doubt that if these young men were white, none of this would have happened.

Apparently no one considered that Jason might actually have been at the bank to withdraw money from his bank account. He had his ATM card out when the family arrived at the bank. He thought it odd when the woman suddenly announced that she had forgotten something in the car and the three of them left. You can draw your own conclusions.

I understand that the Metropolitan Police Department has issued a statement that the officers acted in accordance with MPD policies. If that is truly the case, then that is an even sadder commentary, because it shows that this problem is ingrained in the fabric of the police department and is endemic to the performance of their duties. And if that is the case, then a review and revision of those policies is long overdue.

We are in the process of fully investigating this incident, and we intend to hold all culpable individuals, as well as the District of Columbia, responsible through whatever legal means possible.

Jason suffered injury to his left shoulder, for which he has sought medical treatment, as well as other parts of his body. But the physical pain pales in comparison to the psychological and emotional pain that he and Michael suffered. This has to stop, and we hope and pray that this case will bring a better awareness to the public that something needs to be done and that status quo is wholly unacceptable in a civilized society.