

National Black Church Initiative

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The National Black Church Initiative Condemns the Verdict of Mr. Wone's Case

The defendants are guilty and they are murderers says the judge, and the church

Washington, DC - The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 34,000 churches, is shocked at the not guilty verdict of the DC Superior Court case adjudicating the conspiracy surrounding the slaying of Robert Wone. Wone, a respected attorney was brutally stabbed while staying overnight with friends - Joseph Price, Victor Zaborsky, and Dylan Ward. These three white men, partners in what they described as a 'family', were charged with conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and tampering with evidence. They are plain and simple, murderers. In the four years since Wone's brutal murder there has been no justice for Wone and his family and no answers to the most important questions – Who committed this heinous crime? Why? Why, in this day of modern, technological crime-solving techniques can there be so many unanswered questions?

The three defendants in this case have asserted from the beginning that they have experienced prejudice at the hands of the Judicial System based on their sexuality. Given the not guilty verdict - NBCI is inclined to believe that these white, wealthy men were in fact given preferential treatment and that the Asian victim has suffered the true injustice. The DC Police Department and the US Attorney's office, held responsible for preparing and implementing an air-tight case, have really dropped the ball here.

How can we trust the administrators of the legal system – in this case the DC Police and the prosecuting attorney - when they spend an excessive amount of time on a case and fail so miserably? Chief Lanier of the DC Police Force should be personally blamed for this miscarriage of justice as she oversaw an investigation, which overturned little conclusive evidence thereby allowing a murderer to roam free in DC. The detective division charged with the leg-work on this case calls into question if the DC Police Force is a competent investigative body facilitating the prosecution of criminals. They are worse than keystone cops, they are bumbling idiots.

In this case, while the participants and circumstances are admittedly murky, the outcome is clear – a man was murdered. The job then of the DC Police Force is to not only find the person or persons responsible for the murder, but to conduct the investigation in such a way that the US Legal System is capable of prosecuting that murderer. This did not happen in this case - the DC Police Department should apologize not only to Wone's family but all DC residents as they have been negligent in the investigation of a violent crime. For those of us who are African American, we know all too well the sloppiness of the District Police Department, and police departments around the country, and are saddened to see that this carelessness extends to all races.

What is obvious to all, including the judge deciding this case, was that the crime scene had been "cleaned up" or "altered". In the immediate aftermath the three defendants also had suspiciously coordinated stories detailing an implausible alternative. NBCI agrees that this case contained difficulties which potentially prevented these three men from being successfully convicted of murder, despite the fact that they should have been charged. However, Glenn Kirschner, Assistant U.S. attorney, couldn't even muster an able prosecution on these seemingly irrefutable and scandalously reduced charges. He should be fired immediately.

The circumstances of Wone's death point directly at the three defendants in this case and the judge responsible for their sentencing admitted as much. In her ruling, Judge Lynn Leibovitz indicated that she did not believe the housemate's 'story' of an unknown intruder and that she believed that the three defendants knew who committed the crime. Despite these relative certainties, the judge was unable to hand down a guilty verdict because "the prosecution failed to prove" these accusations. Now the mistakes of the DC Police Department are compounded by mistakes made by the prosecuting attorneys.

NBCI would like to commend Judge Lynn Leibovitz as the heroine of this outrageous legal farce. Despite her sworn oath of objectivity, she still noted the "powerful" evidence which cast doubt on the innocence of the three defendants. She further describes the situation as having "many suspicious and even damning circumstances," as well as noting the "inappropriate demeanor and conduct of the defendants." Despite the bungled evidence corresponding to the case, Leibovitz makes note that "it is very likely that Mr. Price pulled the murder weapon from Mr. Wone's chest." She also states that "even if the defendants did not participate in the murder, some or all of them knew enough about the circumstances of it to provide helpful information to law enforcement and have chosen to withhold that information for reasons of their own."

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of NBCI, states, "This case is baffling. I cannot believe that we live in a country with all the forensic tools and sophisticated methods of investigation and we are unable to catch three murderers. It is either that the US Attorney's Office bungled this case, which is a moral outrage, or they just did not care because the victim was Asian. The DC Police failed in the way they handled this case. The DC Black Church Initiative, our sister initiative in the District of Columbia, persuaded then councilwoman, Kathy Patterson from Ward 3, to have the District Inspector General conduct an investigation on the rate of closure in cases. Here is another case that remains open. I am sad to conclude that if you are white, rich, and gay you can get away with murder in the District of Columbia."

In the past, NBCI has spoken out against violence against homosexuals {<http://www.naltblackchurch.com/pdf/condemn-beating.pdf>, <http://www.naltblackchurch.com/pdf/dead-soldier.pdf>} but none of the local or national gay groups have spoken out against this miscarriage of justice. Are they not concerned about this murder? Outcries are heard loud and clear when these organizations or members of their community are wronged – what kind of hypocrisy is at play when they refuse to respond when homosexuals perpetrate a wrong? Where is the Human Rights Campaign press release on this? The smell of hypocrisy stinks in the case.

Joseph R. Price, Victory J. Zaborsky, and Dylan M. Ward may think that they got away with murder, but this is temporary. It may take time, but the scripture says, “Things that are done in the dark shall come to light.” Eventually, someone’s moral conscience will prevail, and they will seek out the church or some other source to confess their sins. The church will gladly forgive them of their wrongs, but the church will also urge them to confess their sins to the police. NBCI and the church strongly believes that peace can only be achieved by attempting to live a life free of sin, and when this is not possible, confessing these sins. We urge them in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, right this wrong and bring peace to the family of the tragically slain Robert Wone.

About NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 African American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI’s mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. The National Black Church Initiative’s methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science. The National Black Church Initiative’s purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the-box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI’s programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work.