



Today the charges against Martese Johnson were dropped, and so today is a victory for equality and justice. Three months ago we, along with the nation, were horrified by the brutal and bloody assault of Martese Johnson by an Alcoholic Beverage Control officer. We were horrified because the violence we had been protesting since September had landed directly on our doorstep; we were horrified by the blood that trickled down his face as he begged for mercy that would never come; we were horrified because it was yet another reminder that no matter one's education level, achievements, or accolades, Black bodies remain under attack in this country. As we have seen since March in North Carolina, Baltimore, McKinney, and countless other places across the nation, this attack does not seem to be letting up.

Still, today is a victory – for Martese, and for us – and we should all celebrate it. We must celebrate that, in this instance, our judicial system moved closer to a *justice* system. We must celebrate that today a man whose life was imminently threatened is now able to continue his ascendance. We must remember that so many did not survive the threats that came to them; so many were forced to the ground, never to rise again.

And so today we celebrate life, and tomorrow we must fight for humanity. We must fight to rescue the humanity of those who continue to dehumanize our brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, and friends. We must fight for the recognition of the fundamental truth that we love and we hurt just as deeply as anyone else, and that we deserve to be treated humanely.

And when we are not, we deserve justice and equity.

There is much work to be done. This is only the first step in the right direction – a direction that our society has strayed from for far too long. The next steps include charges being brought against the officer who brutalized Martese, and an end to ABC's law enforcement mandate. Just as importantly, let us not ever forget and let us always continue to fight for the many people whose names we will never know, and who will never know the justice that Martese rightfully received today.

In Solidarity,

The Black Student Alliance at the University of Virginia