

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHO: Los Angeles Coalition for Justice for Oscar Grant
WHAT: Press Conference, Rally, and Beginning of Johannes Mehserle Trial
WHERE: 210 W. Temple Street; Criminal Justice Center, Front Steps
DATE: Thursday, June 10th, 2010
TIMELINE: Gathering/Protest Begins—8:00 AM
Trial Begins—8:30, 9th Floor, Dept 104
Press Conference w/ Oscar Grant's Family—12:00-12:30 PM (lunch)
Trial continues throughout day.
CONTACT: Aidge Patterson, aidge@aestheticscrew.com, 323-304-5941
Elizabeth Venable, elziav@gmail.com, 951-640-7747

Johannes Mehserle Trial for Murder of Oscar Grant Begins Opening Statements on June 10th -- Mass Rally Planned for June 14th

The Los Angeles Coalition for Justice for Oscar Grant, Oscar Grant's mother, Wanda Johnson, and uncle, Cephus Johnson, as well as Jack Bryson, whose two sons who were on the platform with Oscar, will speak at a press conference during lunchtime (approximately 12:00-12:30) during the first day of the murder trial of Johannes Mehserle. Former BART Officer Johannes Mehserle fatally shot Oscar Grant on New Years Day, 2009. **The case is unprecedented, as former officer Mehserle is the first law enforcement officer in California ever tried for murder in the “line of duty.”**

Mass Rally by Los Angeles Coalition for Justice for Oscar Grant on June 14th

At the first hearing, in January, the Los Angeles Coalition for Justice for Oscar Grant organized a rally of 100 people, and has remained a steady presence at all hearings. Members of this coalition will hold a mass rally on June 14th to mark the start of the trial of Mehserle. They will also be joined by protestors from Oakland and New York City. Members of more than 20 Los Angeles organizations have joined together in coalition to support the protest.

Rains Moves to Remove Evidence of Racial Slurs (Wednesday June 9, 2010) Will Judge Perry agree to get rid of video evidence of Pirone calling Grant a “Bitch Ass Nigger”?

Attorney Michael Rains has moved to remove video evidence of former officer Tony Pirone in which Pirone refers to Grant three times as a “bitch ass nigger.” Removing this evidence would mean that the jury never sees it. The jury would not know that this was the context in which Grant was shot. They would have clear evidence of racial discrimination directly removed from the case. The family of Grant and supporters feel that this is crucial evidence that the jury needs to hear. However Judge Perry (who presided over the corrupt Rampart scandal in which Rains let all but one corrupt officer go without charges) has been highly cooperative with Rains and has approved a very high proportion of his motions.

No Black Jurors on Majority-White Jury (Tuesday June 8th, 2010)

The Mehserle jurors have been picked, and not one African-American is among them. Indeed, the majority of the jurors are white. This is not a representative jury of the City or County of Los Angeles.

The trial was moved from Oakland to Los Angeles after extensive coverage of the shooting—as well as community uproar over the injustice. One argument that Attorney Rains specifically made was that he did

not think that Black jurors from Oakland would be fair to Mehserle. Rains successfully excluded Black jurors from the Los Angeles jury pool. The fact that the majority of jurors on this trial are white is likely to have an impact on the outcome of the trial, as white jurors may feel more sympathy/affiliation with Mehserle.

Attorney Rains had also previously tried to bias the jury pool by asking that police officers should be allowed to serve on Mehserle's jury—a practice that would have been illegal and was thrown out by Judge Perry.

Aidge Patterson said, "We do not have confidence that the District Attorney's office will pursue meaningful justice, or that this trial will be presided over fairly by Judge Perry, who let every police officer but one escape punishment during the Rampart scandal. This trial is only happening because the people of Oakland stood up powerfully, and Johannes Mehserle is only going to be convicted for Oscar Grant's murder if Los Angeles stands united as one and demands it."

Community members are also outraged at Rain's attempts to portray Oscar Grant—the victim of the shooting—as a criminal. Jack Bryson, father of two of the young men with Oscar Grant at the train station, stated, "They are trying to paint Oscar Grant as a criminal who was a great threat to society. But we can see that Oscar, lying facedown, was not threatening the officer who shot him in the back. We should not be putting Oscar Grant on trial—it is Johannes Mehserle who is charged with murder."

What started as a coalition between Northern and Southern California is blossoming into a statewide movement against police misconduct. New regions are joining the coalition from all over the state, demanding justice for the murder of Oscar Grant; conviction and incarceration of Ex-Officer Johannes Mehserle for murder; and an end to the police brutality that runs rampant throughout the nation.

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